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BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR ORIENTATION PROGRAMS ON INCOMING FRESHMEN

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Master's Project

Submitted to the School of Human Movement, Sport, and Leisure Studies
Bowling Green State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION
In
Tourism, Leisure, and Event Planning

April 20, 2016

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Abstract

Outdoor orientation programs created for incoming freshmen in a collegiate setting have the potential to mitigate some current social risks and inadequate levels of preparedness students face when entering university. The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact outdoor orientation programming had on a group of students who voluntarily attended the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program Freshman Wilderness Experience (FWE). A questionnaire containing five sections of questions (i.e., activity comfort level; impact knowledge; technical skills and knowledge; group development; leader evaluation) for a total of 22 questions was administered to a convenience sample of participants ($N = 40$) before and after the FWE trip occurred. Each section of questions was rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with one being the lowest score, and seven being the highest.

Data were analyzed for statistical significance using a dependent t-test to compare pre- and post- quantitative measures in order to obtain an overall measure of impact and effectiveness that the BGSU FWE outdoor orientation programs had on students. In addition, separate t-tests were calculated for each category of question to analyze and evaluate specific differences within each category. The dependent t-tests were used to analyze whether an overall increase occurred in scores pre- to post-trip, and to compare the overall mean scores for each category of questions.

Significant effects were found ($t(39) = 0.011$, $p < .05$) after evaluating the overall scores across the five categories of questions (i.e., activity knowledge, impact knowledge, technical skills and knowledge, group development, and leader evaluation). Significant effects occurred within the "Technical Skills and Knowledge" ($t(39) = 0.047$, $p < .05$), and "Leader Evaluation" categories ($t(39) = 0.001$, $p < .05$) although no significant effects were found in the "Activity Comfort Level" ($t(39) = 0.159$, $p < .05$), "Impact Knowledge" ($t(39) = 0.237$, $p < .05$), or in the

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“Group Development” categories ($t(39) = 0.136, p < .05$). The overall mean scores and those of the technical skills and knowledge and leader evaluation groups of questions significantly increased post-trip. In conclusion the students attending the BGSU Freshman Wilderness Experience increased their levels of confidence and preparedness for attending college and benefitted from attending.

Introduction

In recent years, colleges and universities around the United States of America have confronted problems recruiting and retaining students attending their institutions. The retention challenge has led to the implementation of different kinds of college orientation programs. Currently, student retention is considered to be one of the most challenging issues within higher education (HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002). Bell, Gass, Nafziger, and Starbuck (2014) state “college orientation can be defined as the process of assisting students in the integration into their academic community” (2014, p. 32). Furthermore, research has shown that the initial experiences in which a first year student participates has the potential to be the most important factor regarding whether that student feels successful or unsuccessful in college (Bell et al., 2014). Outdoor orientation programs currently exist in over 191 colleges and universities within the United States (Bell et al., 2014); however, they are being eliminated at the rate of six outdoor orientation programs per year (Bell & Vaillancourt, 2011).

Waylord and James (2010) found that participants attending outdoor orientation trips consistently have only positive feedback and that they fail to mention any negative experiences encountered with these programs. This predominantly positive experience in turn heightens the students’ confidence for attending and remaining at the university while assisting them in realizing that the students are “stronger, mentally and physically” than they originally believed prior to attending an outdoor orientation course (Waylord & James, 2010). Outdoor orientation programs have demonstrated the capacity to increase retention rates, grade point average, and self-efficacy within participants (Bell et al., 2014), which contributes to the overall success of the institutions.

It is important to consider that outdoor orientation programs are unique among college orientation programs due to the wilderness setting; wilderness settings apply specific attention to personal and community needs. Due to the uniqueness, the distinctive attention results in the development of mutual social support and trust (Bell, 2014) which forges pathways for positive success before their university careers begin. Assisting students with engaging in the social and academic life of the university has been a key for institutions to retaining students in the future (Bell, 2014). Outdoor orientation programs promote this engagement in very important ways.

Austin, Martin, Mittelstaedt, Schanning and Olge (2009) studied the sense of place and social benefits that students had after attending Outdoor Program experiences. During the study the researchers looked at how Outdoor Program activities nurture a sense of place among students. They went further to see if attending an Outdoor Program trip had any social benefits for students. Austin et al., (2009) conducted these tests using a 32 item pre- and post-test questionnaire that the researchers created after reviewing other literature. Questions were primarily structured as a five-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). The investigators analyzed the data through dependent t-tests (Austin et al., 2009).

This study is one of many that demonstrated Outdoor Program activities, such as outdoor orientation experiences, allow students opportunities to nurture the development of community and maximize the potential for student growth (Austin et al., 2009). The results were found to be significant when comparing pre-test with post-test questionnaires. Austin et al. (2009) found that participants who attended the activities had increased their number of friends overall (2.2 friends total, per participant) after attending an outdoor activity. In addition, the researchers found that the participants had a significant increase in the amount of people who they trusted with a personal, emotional secret. Prior to participation, the students claimed to trust 0.6 people on

campus with an emotional, personal secret while after participating, the students divulged that they would now trust 4.8 other students with an emotional, personal secret (Austin et al., 2009).

Similar to Austin et al. (2009), Mirkin and Middleton (2014) used five-point Likert scale questionnaire items in a study that investigated the social climate among students in Outdoor Program activities and how it relates to peer interaction. Mirkin and Middleton (2014) began their study by stating:

“Outdoor courses create a unique context outside the parameters of traditional school and peer groups where students are less encumbered by preconceived notions or peer relationships, and thus provide social climates that may foster adaptive forms of social motivation” (p. 232).

This quotation helps reinforce the notion that outdoor programs, courses, and experiences create an impact that may be irreplaceable for many students during their undergraduate study at a university. The purpose of the Mirkin and Middleton study was to investigate peer interactions. The results obtained from their surveys showed that, after participating in an Outdoor Program trip, the students felt they were able to gain an opportunity that promoted social development in an open environment, where they would not be judged or analyzed and which lead to truer friendships (Mirkin & Middleton, 2014).

Data support the belief that incoming freshman who participate in outdoor orientation trips, such as the BGSU Freshman Wilderness Experience, may have a greater chance of remaining at Bowling Green State University after their first year and may obtain a higher average grade point average than students who did not participate in a wilderness adventure like an outdoor orientation program (Bell et al., 2014). Outdoor orientation experiences are created to help enhance student growth, as shown in another study conducted by Boyd and Colquhoun

(2013). Their study examined the relationships among students, as well as instructors/leaders, that result from participating in an outdoor experience. During the study they looked at the experiences both the teachers and students had while teaching/learning in an outdoor setting.

Results showed that even if the teacher had never taught in any outdoor setting before, there was a more positive learning atmosphere and outcomes on both sides (Boyd & Colquhoun, 2013). Both students and teachers had higher motivation and were more engaged outdoors than their levels of motivation and engagement while inside an indoor classroom. The researchers believe that the deepest learning occurred when students and teachers were at their greatest level of involvement, which occurred in an outdoor setting. In addition, research has shown that wilderness settings provide a unique focus on community and personal needs, enhancing growth (Bell, 2014). Students were able to connect with professors on a deeper, more personal level, which encouraged trust and optimized their overall learning experience. Boyd and Colquhoun (2013) also found that the positive emotional connections created stronger memories, allowing the students to enhance their learning experience to the greatest potential (2013).

Similarly, Grocott and Hunter (2009) found that participants who attended a ten-day outdoor experience had a long-lasting (extended over three months) increase in self-esteem, decrease in hostility and greater self-worth (2009). In an article by Daniel, Bobilya, Kalisch and McAvoy (2014) the authors explored the current knowledge regarding Outdoor Adventure Education programs and knowledge gaps between administrations. For example, during Bowling Green State University's outdoor orientation trip, participants are instructed to do a "solo hike" which defined by Daniel et al., (2014) is "...a period of time during which participants are intentionally placed alone for the purposes of "reflection, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and confidence building"" (p. 5). An activity such as a "solo hike" is frequently seen as a risky

activity from an administrative standpoint due to concern that participants may be alone for a period of time during which they might suffer a physical injury or psychological trauma. The research shows that the risk is minimal when compared to the potential for benefits that participants obtain from doing these solo hikes in a safe manner (Daniel et al., 2014). During solo hikes, participants are encouraged to reflect and grow from a personal standpoint. Solo hikes differ depending on the program: however, research has shown that solo hikes create important lasting effects in self-confidence and personal development (Daniel et al., 2014).

A study conducted by Flood and Parker (2014) investigated the awareness of Outdoor Programs in collegiate settings to understand student motivations and constraints associated with the importance of Outdoor Program trips. They found that the most important motivation factors regarding why students go on Outdoor Program trips were: “get exercise, help release tension, experience new and different things, give my mind a rest, and get away from demands of life” (Flood & Parker, 2014). These findings reinforced that participating in outdoor orientation programs and outdoor activities decrease stress levels, increase quality of life, promote student development/personal growth, and provide a safe social environment that promotes trust.

Because of the consistent problems retaining students, university administrations have searched for different ways to create first year orientation-programs that increase retention rates. One of the solutions at several universities has been to create freshmen-specific orientation programs. Wolfe and Kay (2011) found that participants who attended freshmen outdoor orientation trips had strong positive, life changing experiences. Several of their student participants stated that it was one of the most positive experiences of their lives and helped eliminate anxieties and worries they previously had about attending college (Wolfe & Kay, 2011).

The first outdoor orientation trip was created in 1935 at Dartmouth College; however, other outdoor programs did not appear on other campuses until 1968, when Prescott College's outdoor program commenced (Bell et al., 2014).

Method

My study focused on the overall impact outdoor orientation programming has on participants' preparedness and confidence for beginning their university career. This study explored and hypothesized the idea that when incoming freshmen voluntarily participate in an outdoor orientation program they will have an overall increase in preparedness for attending their first year of university and specifically demonstrate greater confidence and knowledge in their outdoor technical skills due to the amount of time spent in the backcountry.

Participants

The Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program outdoor orientation trip (Freshman Wilderness Experience) began in 2008. Students who now attend the Freshman Wilderness Experience additionally enrolled in an academic course their first semester attending the university (located in Appendix C). The students are required to be an incoming freshman student at Bowling Green State University, however no previous outdoor experience is necessary (Freshman Wilderness Experience, n.d.). For my study, I have examined the questionnaires completed by forty (40) past participants in the FWE.

A total of 40 participant questionnaires were obtained from an existing dataset acquired from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program's outdoor orientation trip, the Freshman Wilderness Experience (Freshman Wilderness Experience, n.d.). The students voluntarily signed up for the trip during their senior year of high school before beginning their first year of college at Bowling Green State University. Ages, genders, and personal information

of participants were not disclosed on the questionnaires, and outdoor experience varied from participant to participant, and participants were required to attend the Freshman Wilderness Experience course (Freshman Wilderness Experience, n.d.). In addition, all participants attending the Freshman Wilderness Experience were required to be incoming freshmen for Bowling Green State University.

Procedures

The independent variable, the impact of the BGSU Freshman Wilderness Trip, was measured by pre- and post-trip questionnaires completed by Bowling Green State University incoming freshmen who had participated in the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program Freshman Wilderness Experience. The Freshman Wilderness Experience falls into the category of outdoor orientation programs because it meets the following criteria laid out by Bell, Gass, Nafziger, & Starbuck (2014):

“...(a) students are placed in small groups of 15 or fewer individuals; (b) students spend at least 1 night camping away from campus; and (c) the program includes one or more adventure experiences (e.g., hiking, rock climbing, canoeing, ropes course)” (p.33).

The five categories of dependent variables ((i.e., activity comfort level; impact knowledge; technical skills and knowledge; group development; and leader evaluation) focused on the overall participant preparedness and confidence for beginning university careers.

The students filled out a registration packet (located in Appendix D) before the trip began, which assessed prior experience and medical history, neither of which were analyzed for this study. The students had the option of choosing between two different weeklong trips: the first option was backpacking 35 miles along the Appalachian Trail in western North Carolina; the second option was canoeing along the Manistee River in northern Michigan (Freshman

Wilderness Experience, n.d.). The students were placed into groups of seven students, camped outside for a week, and participated in either the backpacking or the canoeing trips, which met the outdoor orientation criteria, identified earlier (Bell et al., 2014).

The participants were asked to complete an evaluative questionnaire (located in Appendix A and Appendix B) before and after their wilderness trips to measure the impact the course had on their overall well-being and preparedness for beginning university. The Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) approval was not needed because no personal information (name, age, gender, etc.) was provided on the questionnaires, and the data were obtained as a pre-existing dataset from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program, Department of Recreation and Wellness, Division of Student Affairs. The questionnaire contained 22 items, which were grouped into five categories: activity comfort level; impact knowledge; technical skills and knowledge; group development; and leader evaluation. All questions were rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with room for written comments below. The written comments were not analyzed as part of this study.

The activity comfort level portion contained three questions (i.e., how comfortable are you with sleeping outdoors; how comfortable are you with backpacking; and how comfortable are you with canoeing) used to assess how comfortable the participant was in the backcountry and how comfortable the participant was with their chosen wilderness activity (backpacking or canoeing). No prior outdoor experience was necessary for participating in the Freshman Wilderness Experience, so impact levels and results often varied.

The impact knowledge category contained three questions (i.e., how well do you understand the seven Leave No Trace principles; how well do you understand how to minimize your impact on the environment; and how well do you understand your daily actions and

environmental impact). These items were designed to assess the participants' perceived knowledge on the environmental impact an individual can have.

The technical skills and knowledge group contained eight questions (i.e., using a camp stove to cook meals; setting up a bear bag line; map reading; using the bathroom in the backcountry; transition challenges in to college; ways in which communication differs; aspects of diversity; and how ready do you feel for college). These items were designed to evaluate how familiar the participants were with technical, or "hard," skills in the backcountry (two hours away from definitive medical care). Additionally, four of the questions in this category assess how comfortable the participants were with beginning their university studies.

The fourth question section, group development, contained three questions (i.e., how well do you know the rest of the participants on the trip; how comfortable are you with the rest of the participants on the trip; and how much value do you place on getting to know the other participants on the trip). These items intended to evaluate how well the participants know the other companions on their trip and the level of camaraderie that occurred.

The final section, leader evaluation, consisted of five questions (i.e., how well are your leaders prepared; how well are your leaders communicating with participants; how effective are your leaders' leader to leader communication and relationship; how willing are your leaders to help participants; and how well do your leaders manage risk). These items were different from the previous four categories because they intended to assess the trip leaders' preparedness for the backpacking and canoeing portions, respectively.

Analysis

Quantitative data were obtained from the 40 pre-test questionnaires and the 40 post-test questionnaires. Once the data were obtained, I analyzed them and calculated appropriate

statistics to determine the overall impact the Freshman Wilderness Experience may have provided. To determine the statistical significance of any changes, dependent t-tests were calculated on the overall data (the five sections of questions combined) for both pre-trip questionnaires and post-trip questionnaires. In addition, separate dependent t-tests were calculated for each category of questions (i.e., activity comfort level; impact knowledge; technical skills and knowledge; group development; leader evaluation) to analyze the specific differences within each category. As part of calculating the dependent t tests for each category of questions, the means and standard deviations were obtained. All questions were structured using a seven-point Likert scale, with values of one scoring the lowest, and seven scoring the highest level of satisfaction or comfort or performance.

Results

The results of the questionnaires of the 40 students showed that incoming freshmen who attended the outdoor wilderness trips hosted by the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program had an overall benefit once the trip (either backpacking or canoeing) was completed, which can be seen in Table 1. The average means for each category of questions within the questionnaire tended to increase from pre-trip to post-trip. It is important to note that not all apparent pre- to post-trip changes in absolute mean scores were statistically significant. This means that unless the t-test showed a significant change, statistically the trip did not produce a change. I have graphed the means in Figure 1. The levels of confidence, knowledge, and impact tended to increase within the participants as a group once the outdoor orientation trip was completed.

When all five categories of questions (i.e., activity comfort level; impact knowledge; technical skills and knowledge; group development; leader evaluation) were evaluated,

significant results were found and can be seen in Table 1. While there was an significant positive effect on the participants as a whole, $t(39) = 0.011$, $p < .05$, when broken down to each category of questions, varied results were found. There was a significant positive effect for the “Technical Skills and Knowledge” category seen in Table 4 ($t(39) = 0.047$, $p < .05$) as well as the “Leader Evaluation” category ($t(39) = 0.001$, $p < .05$), seen in Table 6. There were not significant effects found in the “Activity Comfort Level” category ($t(39) = 0.159$, $p < .05$) seen in Table 2, the “Impact Knowledge” category seen in Table 3 ($t(39) = 0.237$, $p < .05$), or the “Group Development” category ($t(39) = 0.136$, $p < .05$) seen in Table 5.

Table 1. Combined section *t*-test results

	Pre		Post		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Five Sections	5.0	0.43	6.4	0.28	0.011**

** $p < 0.05$

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Q = Question. All question responses were based off of a seven point Likert scale (1 = lowest score, 7 = highest). Five sections within the questionnaire are as follows: Activity Comfort Level, Impact Knowledge, Technical Skills and Knowledge, Group Development, and Leader Evaluation.

Table 2. Activity Comfort Level *t*-test results

	Pre		Post		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Activity Comfort Level Q1	6.0	1.10	6.1	0.97	
Activity Comfort Level Q2	5.0	1.20	6.1	0.49	
Activity Comfort Level Q3	5.6	0.90	6.7	0.49	0.159**

** $p < 0.05$

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Q = Question. All question responses were based off of a seven point Likert scale (1 = lowest score, 7 = highest).

Table 3. Impact Knowledge *t*-test results

	Pre		Post		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Impact Knowledge Q1	3.1	2.10	6.3	0.88	
Impact Knowledge Q2	5.0	1.60	6.1	0.55	
Impact Knowledge Q3	4.7	1.60	6.7	0.88	0.237**

** $p < 0.05$

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Q = Question. All question responses were based off of a seven point Likert scale (1 = lowest score, 7 = highest).

Table 4. Technical Skills and Knowledge *t*-test results

	Pre		Post		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q1	4.3	1.70	5.9	1.07	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q2	2.5	1.70	5.8	1.13	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q3	4.2	1.60	5.5	1.41	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q4	4.4	2.10	6.3	1.21	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q5	4.9	1.30	6.3	0.79	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q6	4.9	1.30	6.4	0.67	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q7	5.3	1.40	6.5	0.68	
Tech. Skills and Knowledge Q8	5.6	1.10	6.3	0.80	0.047**

** $p < 0.05$

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Q = Question. All question responses were based off of a seven point Likert scale (1 = lowest score, 7 = highest).

Table 5. Group Development *t*-test results

	Pre		Post		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Group Development Q1	1.3	0.50	6.3	0.76	
Group Development Q2	4.3	1.70	6.5	0.78	
Group Development Q3	6.0	1.20	6.7	0.56	0.136**

** $p < 0.05$

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Q = Question. All question responses were based off of a seven point Likert scale (1 = lowest score, 7 = highest).

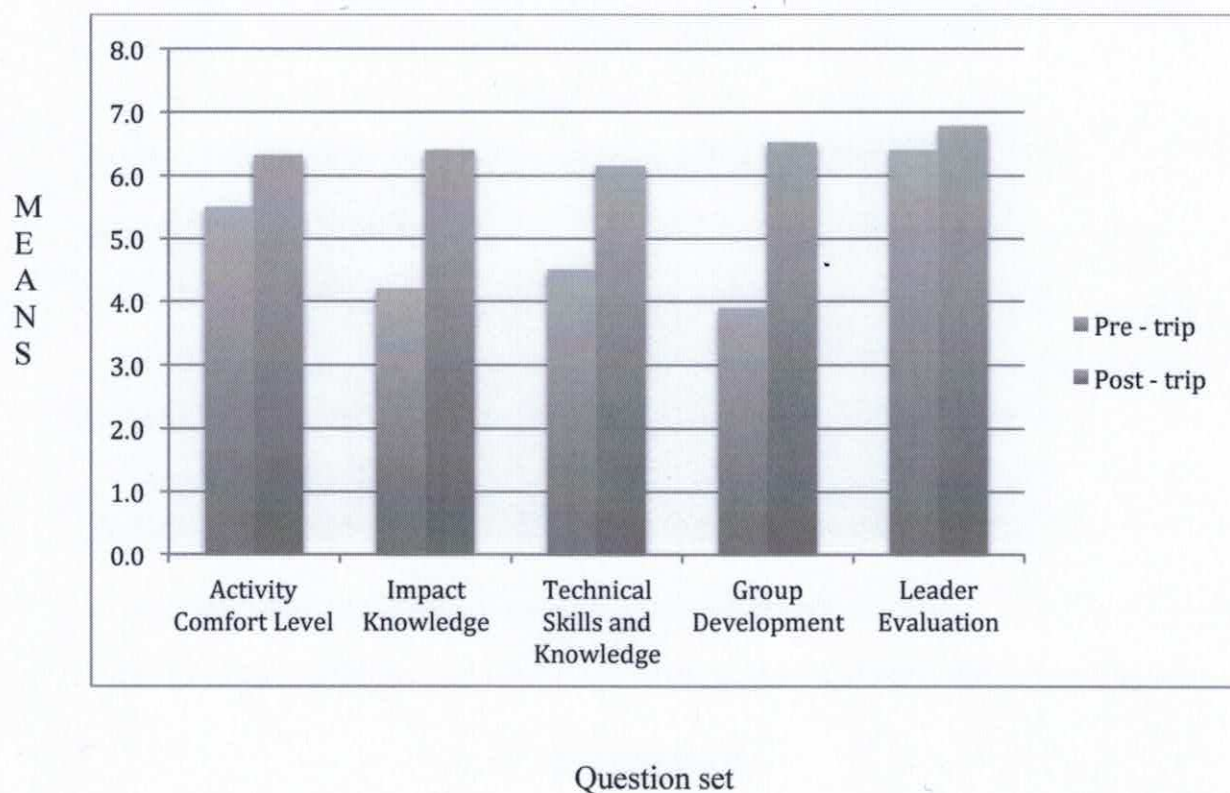
Table 6. Leader Evaluation *t*-test results

	Pre		Post		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Leader Evaluation Q1	6.5	0.80	6.8	0.40	
Leader Evaluation Q2	6.5	0.80	6.8	0.49	
Leader Evaluation Q3	6.4	0.80	6.7	0.56	
Leader Evaluation Q4	6.6	0.80	6.8	0.36	
Leader Evaluation Q5	6.3	0.90	6.8	0.46	0.001**

** $p < 0.05$

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Q = Question. All question responses were based off of a seven point Likert scale (1 = lowest score, 7 = highest).

Figure 1. The average means of each data set of questions pre-trip and post-trip within the questionnaire.



Discussion

Outdoor wilderness program participants perceived an increase in their overall preparedness for beginning their first year of university; knowledge on impacting the environment; technical skills and knowledge needed in the backcountry; camaraderie and preparedness for meeting others in college; greater trust in their trip leaders; and an increase in comfort with their respective choice of activity (canoeing or backpacking). The results of this study challenge administrators in universities and colleges to reconsider eliminating current outdoor orientations programs or reducing funding to outdoor programs. The information provided from this study may also assist with implementing their own outdoor orientation program if there is not one instated. Outdoor orientation programs indeed help foster the emotional aspects and mental levels of preparedness to begin university for incoming freshmen.

In addition, outdoor programs bring a sense of place to the participants, belonging and increase in social benefits such as an increase in friends (Austin et al., 2009). Besides to the external factors, such as social benefits, increased grade point average, and increased institution retention rates, outdoor orientation programs enhance the equally important intrinsic quality of life for participants and students as well. Contribute to lowering stress levels, increasing self-esteem, improving quality of life, and sustaining emotional stability, outdoor program will help enhance the overall experience a student has a given college or university (Austin et al., 2009).

Limitations

Limitations of the study include types of outdoor activities offered, due to cost and distance from Bowling Green State University, as the incoming freshmen only have an option of canoeing or backpacking. An additional limitation would be lack of a control group, and only having a sample size of forty questionnaires; the data has the potential to be more conclusive

with a greater number within the sample size. Finally, as the dataset was a pre-existing dataset obtained from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program, I was not present at the time of the collection. For future research, altering the questions listed on the pre-trip and post-trip questionnaire (found in Appendix A and Appendix B), which could aid with the development of understanding the nature of outdoor orientation programs.

Furthermore, for future research a more conclusive argument could be made if the same questionnaire was done throughout multiple outdoor orientation programs rather than limiting the study to only one university. Each outdoor orientation program is different, and a wider number of students, schools, and level of influence would be reached if this study branched out. An alternative to quantitative data analysis of questionnaires would be to have participants on outdoor orientation trips complete a journal. Doing a qualitative study to determine the impact on the journey these students are experiencing would be another way to approach the questions. Once research can determine what creates the most impact, outdoor orientation programs will be able to better serve their incoming participants and offer more meaningful trips that hone into peer relationship growth.

Both Outdoor Programs and outdoor orientation trips, within Outdoor Programs, in collegiate settings are threatened with elimination every year. As previously stated, every year an average of six collegiate outdoor orientation programs are eliminated (Bell & Vaillancourt, 2011). Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010) stated: "...what students do in college counts more for what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to college" (p.8). Outdoor orientation programs are effective tools for creating social belonging, sense of place, and an increase in confidence to begin university careers (Austin et al.,

2009). Bell and Holmes (2011) found that peer relationships have critical impacts on emotional support and strengthen students' educational gains, which helps with retention.

Additional research could be done on programs that were eliminated, studying why that decision was made, to help support current collegiate outdoor programs, and outdoor orientation programs that are facing the same problems, or threat of elimination. Outdoor orientation programs develop a sense of belonging for incoming students to a small, yet supportive group of peers (Bell et al., 2014). Eliminating these unique orientation programs is detrimental to the students they serve, and have the potential to serve. While all orientation programs are effective and important, outdoor orientation programs are unique and produce increased intrinsic results within participants.

Bell and Holmes (2011) found that students reported making connections and forming bonds were the most important aspects of the orientation programs, and aided with the decision to return to their respective universities. Furthermore, to assist the students, researching *why* students chose to attend outdoor orientation trips will help with catering the trips to their needs. Orientations as a whole have been labeled as time for experimentation, uncertainty, and peer bonding. Further, Bell et al. (2014) revealed that the need to belong is a common theme among incoming students, and is extremely evident in outdoor orientation programs. Accommodating those needs for participants on outdoor orientation trips will assist with retention, and most importantly, overall student experience.

In conclusion, while the Freshman Wilderness Experience did not produce significant results for three specific sets of questions listed on the questionnaire (group development, impact knowledge, and activity comfort level), the means of two sets of questions, as well as the overall (all five sections of questions combined) scores increased post-trip. The outdoor orientation trip

as a whole, however, produced significant result among the students who attended either the canoeing or backpacking trips, solidifying the conclusion that the Freshman Wilderness Experience is an effective outdoor orientation program that produces significant effects specifically on the technical skills and knowledge, as well as significant effects with all five sections combined. The results verify that participating students had greater confidence and were more prepared to begin their first year of college after completing the FWE trips. Significant results were also found for leader evaluation, which will help build a sense of place, belonging, mentorship, and increase social benefits (Austin et al., 2009).

The most successful outdoor orientation programs provide healthy peer connections, undermining status differences as students belong best to groups where they are authentic, valued, and accepted (Bell et al., 2014). Continuing to create and allow these experiences enhancing student growth will not only help with retention for the university, but increase the intrinsic values within each participant. Outdoor professionals implementing, leading, and coordinating these experiences must learn to be good leaders, by learning to be good followers; they adhere to the research and listen to participants by helping them lead, so they in turn as professionals, follow.

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year university students. *Journal of Experiential Education, 34*, 19-34.

APPENDIX A:

Pre-trip questionnaire obtained from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program,
Department of Recreation and Wellness, Division of Student Affairs.

Pre-Trip Participant Evaluation

Activity Comfort level (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate your following comfort level with the following activities:

How comfortable are you with sleeping outdoors?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How comfortable are you with backpacking? (Answer if backpacking)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How comfortable are you with canoeing? (Answer if canoeing)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Impact Knowledge (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate your personal understanding of the following:

How well do you understand the 7 Leave No Trace principles?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do you understand how to minimize your impact on the environment?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do you understand your daily actions and environmental impact?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Technical Skills and Knowledge (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate your comfort level with the following technical skills or personal knowledge associated with the trip:

Using a camp stove to cook meals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Setting up a bear bag line	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Map reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Using the bathroom in the backcountry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transition challenges into college	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ways in which communication differs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aspects of diversity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How ready do you feel for college?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Group Development (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate the following

How well do you know the rest of the participants on the trip?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How comfortable are you with the rest of the participants on the trip?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How much value do you place on getting to know the other participants?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Leader evaluation (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate the performance of your leaders

How well are your leaders prepared?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well are your leaders communicating with participants?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How effective are your leaders' leader-to-leader communication + relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How willing are your leaders to help participants?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do your leaders manage risk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX B:

Post-trip questionnaire obtained from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program,
Department of Recreation and Wellness, Student Affairs.

Post-Trip Participant Evaluation

Activity Comfort level (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate your following comfort level with the following activities:

How comfortable are you with sleeping outdoors?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How comfortable are you with backpacking? (Answer if backpacking)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How comfortable are you with canoeing? (Answer if canoeing)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Impact Knowledge (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate your personal understanding of the following:

How well do you understand the 7 Leave No Trace principles?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do you understand how to minimize your impact on the environment?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do you understand your daily actions and environmental impact?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Technical Skills and Knowledge (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate your comfort level with the following technical skills or personal knowledge associated with the trip:

Using a camp stove to cook meals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Setting up a bear bag line	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Map reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Using the bathroom in the backcountry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transition challenges into college	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ways in which communication differs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aspects of diversity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How ready do you feel for college?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Group Development (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate the following

How well do you know the rest of the participants on the trip?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How comfortable are you with the rest of the participants on the trip?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How much value do you place on getting to know the other participants?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Leader evaluation (1 Low, 7 High)

Please rate the performance of your leaders

How well are your leaders prepared?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well are your leaders communicating with participants?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How effective are your leaders' leader-to-leader communication + relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How willing are your leaders to help participants?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do your leaders manage risk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX C:

Outdoor orientation program brochure (Freshman Wilderness Experience) obtained from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program, Department of Recreation and Wellness, Student Affairs.

Effectiveness of Outdoor Orientation Programs

Research shows exceptional benefits to first year students participating in a wilderness experience program. Students participating in these programs show nearly a 40% increase in satisfaction with campus life and over a 30% increase in retention compared with non-participating students.*

*Mauro, Brian Dr. Measuring the Impact of Experiential Education in First Year Students. Oct. 2007



"Participating in the Freshman Wilderness Experience, easily, has been the best choice I've made in my college career. This trip introduced me to a number of absolutely great people including faculty, and other incoming students, who have become my best friends. I cannot imagine how much different this past year would have been had I not attended the trip, nor would I want to."

~ Amy (2014)

"The BGSU Freshman Wilderness Experience is a great program for incoming freshmen students. I was able to make some very close friends and learn about what to expect in my first year at school. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, have a ton of fun and earn college credit while doing so."

~ Thomas (2014)

**SPACE IN THE PROGRAM IS LIMITED.
REGISTER EARLY TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!**

For More Information:

Graduate Assistant

Jackie Lafave | jlafave@bgsu.edu

Outdoor Program

104 Perry Field House
801 N. Mercer, BG, OH 43403
419-372-2146
outdoorpro@bgsu.edu



@BGSUOutdoorpro



/BgsuOutdoorProgram



/BgsuOutdoorProgram

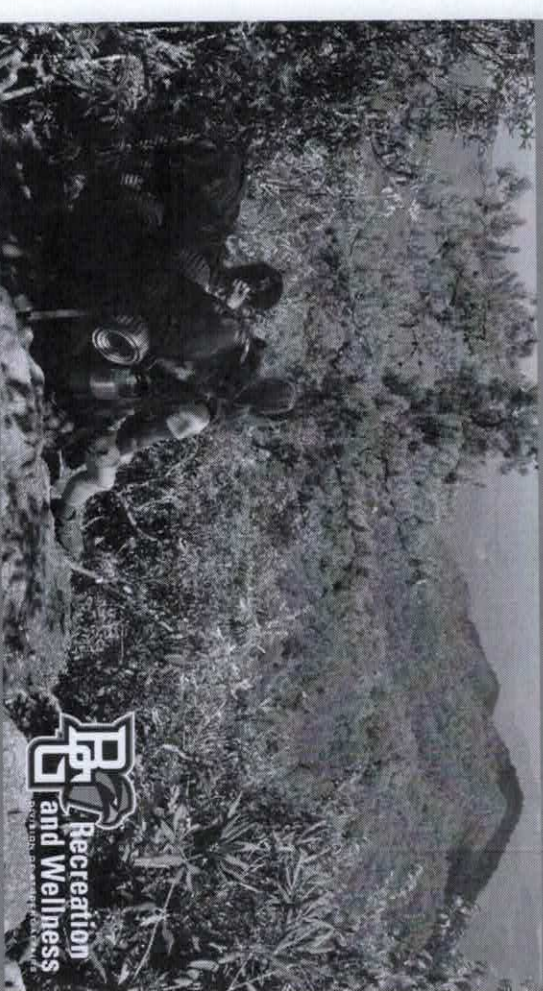
www.bgsu.edu/recrewell/outdoor

FRESHMAN WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

Summer 2015



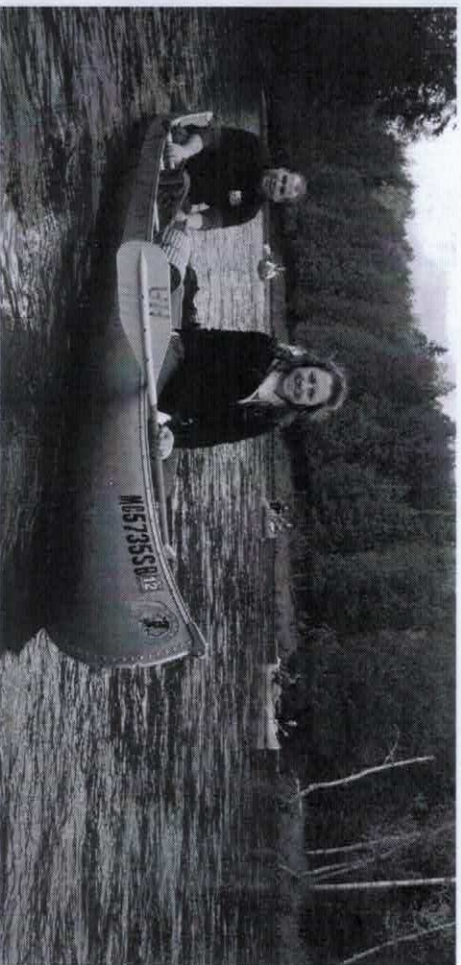
The Freshman Wilderness Experience is a cooperative effort between the Department of Recreation and Wellness' Outdoor Program and BGSU's Academic Affairs Division to offer a wilderness experience program to incoming freshmen. The Freshman Wilderness Experience combines the exciting adventure of an Outdoor Program expedition with the knowledge gained through the BGSU 1000 critical thinking and transition course.



Program Details

Only incoming freshmen may enroll in the Freshmen Wilderness Experience program. Previous outdoor experience is not necessary, however, good physical condition is recommended to participate.

The program begins with a week-long backpacking or canoeing outdoor expedition during either the week of July 22 - 29 or July 31 - August 7. The trip is lead by two trained Outdoor Program staff members and one BGSU faculty member who facilitate outdoor learning skills and portions of the standard BGSU 1000 critical thinking and transition course curriculum in the field. When returning to BGSU, students are enrolled in a class with the other Freshmen Wilderness Experience participants, providing a common bond. Classes meet regularly during the fall semester to cover the remainder of the material in the curriculum. Students who complete the Freshman Wilderness Experience receive three academic credits during the fall semester.



Program Cost

Because this program is a modified form of a BGSU 1000 class, the tuition cost is included in general full-time BGSU tuition. In addition there is a \$330 fee paid to the Outdoor Program to cover costs related to facilitating the backpacking experience or a \$380 fee for canoeing. This fee is separate from the standard tuition and must be paid no later than three weeks prior to the expedition's departure. This cost covers transportation, staffing, lodging, all equipment, and dinners on the trip. A non-refundable \$150 deposit is required to hold a spot in the program.

2015 Trip Dates, Cost, and Availability			
Date	Trip	Cost	Available Space
July 22 - July 29	Backpacking	\$330	14
July 22 - July 29	Canoeing	\$380	7
July 31 - Aug. 7	Backpacking	\$330	14
July 31 - Aug. 7	Canoeing	\$380	7

For current trip availability, contact the Outdoor Program office.

Learning Outcomes

By engaging with Outdoor Program trip leaders, a BGSU faculty member, and other incoming freshmen in a field environment, the knowledge gained from this program goes beyond the traditional classroom. Students participating in these expeditions learn:

- Basic backpacking, canoeing, and camping skills
- Wilderness survival skills
- Intellectual, personal, social, and critical thinking skills that assist in future semesters at BGSU and beyond
- Self-reliance and self-confidence through challenging outdoor and classroom experiences
- Diverse cultures and ideas
- To form friendships with fellow first-year students before the semester even begins
- Bowling Green State University traditions and history
- About the resources offered by BGSU



Common Reading Experience

The common reading experience is a great way for new students to embark upon the intellectual challenges associated with college. In addition to discussing the book in the classroom, BGSU also hosts special events related to the content of the book throughout the fall semester.

During the expeditions students begin discussion of the assigned common reading. Students also keep a journal during the expedition that continues through the course. In this way, students reflect on their experiences using both dialogue from the book and personal learning in the outdoors.

APPENDIX D:

Outdoor orientation program (Freshman Wilderness Experience) registration packet obtained from the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program, Department of Recreation and Wellness, Student Affairs.

- - - FRESHMAN WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE REGISTRATION PACKET - - -

Freshman Wilderness Experience Participant Registration and Activity Contract

To enroll, complete the Participant Registration and Activity Contract, the Backpacking and Camping OR Canoeing and Camping Release, and the Medical History and Physical Assessment Form. After reading all documentation within this registration packet, sign where requested to acknowledge understanding and agreement with the information stated. Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis, with payment in full or as indicated. Participants under 18 years of age require a parent/guardian signature and program coordinator approval.

Submit completed materials by mail: BGSU Outdoor Program, 104 Perry Field House, 801 N. Mercer Road, BG, OH, 43403, by fax: 419.372.8044, or by email: outdoorpro@bgsu.edu. Checks may be enclosed with mail-in registrations. For other payment methods contact Thad Long: 419.372.7479 | longtha@bgsu.edu. Due to Payment Card Industry Compliance, do not fax or email credit card information.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION:

Participant Name (print): _____

Participant Email: _____

Cell Phone Number: (_____) _____

Home Phone Number: (_____) _____

Mailing Address: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Gender: ____ Male ____ Female ____ Transgender

Anticipated Academic Major: _____

T-Shirt Size (circle one): XS S M L XL XXL

How did you learn about the Freshman Wilderness Experience? (circle any that apply)

Web Email Social Media Flyer SOAR Display Word of Mouth Other: _____

Choose a FWE Trip Week (check week and activity desired):

Date	Trip	Registration Down Payment	Balance Due July 1
July 27 – Aug 3, 2016	Backpacking	\$150.00	\$180.00
July 27 – Aug 3, 2016	Canoeing	\$150.00	\$230.00

Why do you want to be a part of the Freshman Wilderness Experience?

Describe your outdoor experience (all levels are encouraged to participate):

CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICIES:

1. If activity is cancelled for any reason by BGSU (i.e. weather, insufficient registration, etc.) a full refund is granted.
2. In the event you cancel your registration, no refund is provided.
3. If you have a medical/family emergency, contact us as soon as possible and provide written documentation from the appropriate authority to the program coordinator. Refunds are at the discretion of the program coordinator.

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS:

1. Activity philosophy is based on experiential education where participants learn by doing in a cooperative atmosphere with minimum impact on the natural environment.
2. BGSU trip leaders (faculty, Outdoor Program staff, student) role is to be an activity resource for the participant. Trip leaders help plan and organize the activity, advise participants on personal preparation needed, provide instruction on safety, minimum impact, and activity skills, and facilitate group issues and goals. Trip leaders are not professional guides.
3. Participants should be self-sufficient in personal responsibilities (carry own weight, setting up and taking down tents, etc.) All participants are expected to help with group tasks such as activity preparation, on-site activities (cooking, cleaning, loading and unloading equipment, etc.) and equipment cleanup after the trip. It is important that participants recognize that the activities are "group-oriented" learning experiences.
4. Participants must treat fellow participants and trip leaders with respect and consideration regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, creed, age, marital status, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or veterans' status.
5. Participants must assume the potential risks associated with the activity, be responsible for their own actions, and be in good physical condition. Participants must agree to follow common safety practices and assist the staff by calling attention to situations that may be hazardous.
6. Participants should have health/accident insurance coverage.
7. Participants must abide by the Bowling Green State University Student Code of Conduct including policies on drug and alcohol use, which states NO ILLEGAL DRUGS or ALCOHOL are permitted. Bowling Green State University is not responsible for any alcohol or drug related accidents, injuries or damages.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

1. Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Telephone: _____
2. Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Telephone: _____

Backpacking and canoeing can be physically and emotionally demanding activities. If there is any question concerning the ability to participate at any time during the session, contact Jacquelyn LaFave: 419.372.2146 | jlafave@bgsu.edu.

Participant Name (print) _____ BGSU ID: _____

Participant Signature _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print) (if under 18) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18) _____ Date: _____

Freshman Wilderness Experience Backpacking and Camping Release

- - - Important: This is a Legal Document - - -

Please read/understand this document before signing. If you have questions please ask us or consult an attorney.

The Outdoor Program, Recreation and Wellness, and Bowling Green State University wants to assure that our guests have a rewarding experience. We wish to inform our guests that backpacking is not risk free. The same elements that contribute to the unique character and fun of backpacking such as transportation to and from the event and physical exertion can cause loss or damage to equipment, injury, illness, or in extreme cases, permanent trauma or death. We do not want to heighten or reduce your enthusiasm for the experience, but we do want you to know in advance what to expect and to be informed of the potential risks. We ask that you read, sign and return this document back to our office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISKS

While backpacking you will be living, camping, and traveling outdoors, where you will be subject to numerous risks – environmental and other risks.

1. Meals are prepared over stoves and open fires. Water will require disinfecting. Camping hazards may include burns, cuts, diarrhea, and flu-like illness.
2. You will be traveling by foot with weight on your back. Travel may be rugged, unpredictable and off trail terrain may include, boulder fields, downed timber, river crossings, high mountain passes, snow and ice, steep slopes, and slippery rocks. Risks include collisions/falling, drowning, blisters, injured bones, muscles, and ligaments, getting lost, and others associated with such travel.
3. Environmental Risks include: rapidly moving, deep or cold water, insects, snakes, predators, and other animals; falling or rolling rock, lightning, avalanches, flash floods and unpredictable forces of nature including weather that may change to extreme conditions without notice.
4. Due to the possibly of extreme weather conditions, the following illnesses are possible hypothermia, frostbite, altitude illness, sunburn, heatstroke, dehydration, and other mild or serious conditions.
5. Sleeping out-of-doors can present special problems. Even with outdoor mattresses or pads, sleeping can be uncomfortable. Sleeping outdoors where the air is subject to greater environmental changes can be uncomfortable. Insects and other animals may visit your campsite or disturb you at night.

This list is not an exclusive or exhaustive list of possible injuries, trauma or accidents that may occur while backpacking. It is also possible that some participants would suffer mental anguish or trauma from their experience or injuries.

CONTRACT, WAIVER, RELEASE & INDEMNIFICATION

I desire to participate in the following backpacking trip **Freshman Wilderness Experience on the Appalachian Trail** to be held **in July of 2016**, and I certify that I am fully capable of participating. I state that I have read the above statement on some of the possible risks involved and therefore assume full responsibility for myself, for any bodily injury, death and loss of personal property and any expenses as a result of my negligence, negligence of my family, negligence of other participants, negligence of trip leaders, or the negligence of the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program. I also understand that Bowling Green State University reserves the right to refuse any person it judges to be incapable of meeting the rigors and requirements of participating in backpacking.

I agree to indemnify, release, waive, forever discharge and covenant not to sue the State of Ohio, Bowling Green State University and its governing board, officers, agents, employees, any students acting as employees, and volunteers ("Releasees") from and against any and all liability for any harm, injury, damages, claims, demands, actions, causes of action, costs, and expenses of any nature that maybe sustain by me or by any property belonging to me, whether caused by the negligence or carelessness of the Releasees. This includes transportation to or from the premises where the trip is being held, or any supplemental travel being conducted with the backpacking trip.

It is my expressed intent that this release and hold harmless agreement shall bind myself, the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my estate, family, heirs, administrators, personal representatives, or assigns, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a "Release, Waiver, Discharge, and Covenant Not to Sue" the Releasees.

As liquidated damages, I hereby agree that if Bowling Green State University is forced to defend any action, lawsuit or litigation by myself, my executors, or my heirs, on my family's or my behalf, my heirs or executors and I agree to pay Bowling Green State University's costs and attorney fees if they successfully defend such action, lawsuits or litigation.

I hereby give Releasees permission for transportation to any medical facility or hospital and I authorize for any qualified guide or medical personnel to render necessary emergency medical care for myself. I understand and agree that Releasees assume no responsibility for any injury or damage which might arise out of or in connection with such authorized emergency medical treatment.

In signing this release, I acknowledge and represent that I have carefully read this agreement and understand its contents and that I sign this document on my own free act and deed. I further state that I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent to sign this Agreement; and that I execute this release for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by the same. I further state that there are no health-related reasons or problems which preclude or restrict my participation in this Backpacking Trip, and I have adequate health insurance necessary to provide for and pay any medical costs that may be attendant as a result of injury to me.

I also agree that this Release shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio. And agree to the site of any lawsuit and the law governing any such lawsuit shall be Ohio and governed by Ohio state law. Should any part of this release be declared unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining parts or paragraphs shall remain in full force and effect. A copy of this release can be used as if it was an original.

I authorize and release Bowling Green State University the use of my photograph or video recording for any purposes within the scope of general marketing.

I have adequate health, disability and life insurance for my family and myself.

***THIS IS A RELEASE OF LEGAL RIGHTS.
READ AND BE CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND IT BEFORE SIGNING.***

I, _____, of my own free will, for my family, minor children, heirs, executors and myself, have read, understand and acknowledge the risks and liability for myself and my family this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Participant Name (print)

Participant Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (print) (if under 18)

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18)

Participant Address

Participant Phone Number

In case of emergency contact: _____

Phone number of emergency contact: _____

I carry medical insurance: Yes ___ No ___

Name of provider (if known): _____

Freshman Wilderness Experience Canoeing and Camping Release

- - - Important: This is a Legal Document - - -

Please read/understand this document before signing. If you have questions please ask us or consult an attorney.

The Outdoor Program, Recreation and Wellness, and Bowling Green State University wants to assure that our guests have a rewarding experience. We wish to inform our guests that Canoeing and Camping are not risk free. The same elements that contribute to the unique character and fun of Canoeing and Camping such as transportation to and from the event and physical exertion can cause loss or damage to equipment, injury, illness, or in extreme cases, permanent trauma or death. We do not want to heighten or reduce your enthusiasm for the experience, but we do want you to know in advance what to expect and to be informed of the potential risks. We ask that you read, sign and return this document back to our office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISKS

While canoeing you will be living, camping, and traveling outdoors, where you will be subject to numerous risks – environmental and other risks.

1. Meals are prepared over stoves and open fires. Water will require disinfecting. Camping hazards may include burns, cuts, diarrhea, and flu-like illness.
2. You will be traveling by canoe and by foot with weight on your back. Travel may be rugged, unpredictable and on land terrain may include, boulder fields, downed timber, river crossings, steep slopes, and slippery rocks. Risks include collisions/falling, drowning, getting lost, and others associated with such travel.
3. Environmental Risks include: rapidly moving, deep or cold water, insects, snakes, predators, and other animals; falling or rolling rock, lightning, flash floods and unpredictable forces of nature including weather that may change to extreme conditions without notice. Additional risks hypothermia, frostbite, sunburn, heatstroke, dehydration, and other mild or serious conditions.
4. Sleeping out-of-doors can present special problems. Even with outdoor mattresses or pads, sleeping can be uncomfortable. Sleeping outdoors where the air is subject to greater environmental changes can be uncomfortable. Insects and other animals may visit your campsite or disturb you at night.
5. Your canoe might overturn resulting in your body being subject to the cold water for a period of time leading to hypothermia, injuries from floating debris or drowning.
6. Slip and fall injuries into the water or on rocks are a possibility while you are trying to enter/exit your canoe or tie your canoe ashore.
7. Due to the nature of Canoeing and Camping, you are responsible for your own actions and rescues. Therefore, you must be physically, mentally and emotionally prepared for the trip.
8. You run the risk of being caught in a strainer (fallen trees in the water in which the tree trunk forces objects to be trapped under the trunk) in which you are caught between the force of the water and branches which might drown you.

This list is not an exclusive or exhaustive list of possible injuries, trauma or accidents that may occur while Canoeing and Camping. It is also possible that some participants would suffer mental anguish or trauma from their experience or injuries.

CONTRACT, WAIVER, RELEASE & INDEMNIFICATION

I desire to participate in the following Canoeing and Camping expedition **Freshman Wilderness Experience in July of 2016**, and I certify that I am fully capable of participating. I state that I have read the above statement on some of the possible risks involved and therefore assume full responsibility for myself, for any bodily injury, death and loss of personal property and any expenses as a result of my negligence, negligence of my family, negligence of other participants, negligence of trip leaders, or the negligence of the Bowling Green State University Outdoor Program. I also understand that Bowling Green State University reserves the right to refuse any person it judges to be incapable of meeting the rigors and requirements of participating in Canoeing and Camping.

I agree to indemnify, release, waive, forever discharge and covenant not to sue the State of Ohio, Bowling Green State University and its governing board, officers, agents, employees, any students acting as employees, and volunteers ("Releasees") from and against any and all liability for any harm, injury, damages, claims, demands, actions, causes of

action, costs, and expenses of any nature that maybe sustain by me or by any property belonging to me, whether caused by the negligence or carelessness of the Releasees. This includes transportation to or from the premises where the trip is being held, or any supplemental travel in conjunction with the Canoeing and Camping trip.

It is my expressed intent that this release and hold harmless agreement shall bind myself, the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my estate, family, heirs, administrators, personal representatives, or assigns, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a "Release, Waiver, Discharge, and Covenant Not to Sue" the Releasees.

As liquidated damages, I hereby agree that if Bowling Green State University is forced to defend any action, lawsuit or litigation by myself, my executors, or my heirs, on my family's or my behalf, my heirs or executors and I agree to pay Bowling Green State University's costs and attorney fees if they successfully defend such action, lawsuits or litigation.

I hereby give Releasees permission for transportation to any medical facility or hospital and I authorize for any qualified guide or medical personnel to render necessary emergency medical care for myself. I understand and agree that Releasees assume no responsibility for any injury or damage which might arise out of or in connection with such authorized emergency medical treatment.

In signing this release, I acknowledge and represent that I have carefully read this agreement and understand its contents and that I sign this document on my own free act and deed. I further state that I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent to sign this Agreement; and that I execute this release for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by the same. I further state that there are no health-related reasons or problems which preclude or restrict my participation in this Canoeing and Camping Expedition, and I have adequate health insurance necessary to provide for and pay any medical costs that may be attendant as a result of injury to me.

I also agree that this Release shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio. And agree to the site of any lawsuit and the law governing any such lawsuit shall be Ohio and governed by Ohio state law. Should any part of this release be declared unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining parts or paragraphs shall remain in full force and effect. A copy of this release can be used as if it was an original.

I authorize and release Bowling Green State University the use of my photograph or video recording for any purposes within the scope of general marketing.

I have adequate health, disability and life insurance for my family and myself.

***THIS IS A RELEASE OF LEGAL RIGHTS.
READ AND BE CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND IT BEFORE SIGNING.***

I, _____, of my own free will, for my family, minor children, heirs, executors and myself, have read, understand and acknowledge the risks and liability for myself and my family this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Participant Name (print)

Participant Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (print) (if under 18)

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18)

Participant Address

Participant Phone Number

In case of emergency contact: _____

Phone number of emergency contact: _____

I carry medical insurance: Yes ___ No ___ Name of provider (if known): _____

Freshman Wilderness Experience Medical History and Physical Assessment Form

List all medical conditions, surgeries, or injuries from the last 10 years. Providing inaccurate or incomplete information is a risk to the health and safety of the participant.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION:

Participant Name (print) _____ Date: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender Age: _____

Rate your fitness level (circle one): Couch Potato 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Marathon Runner

Average number of times a week you exercise (circle one): None 1-2 3-4 4-5 More than 5

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS/PREFERENCES:

☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan Other: _____

MEDICAL HISTORY/INFORMATION:

Please check any pre-existing medical conditions (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma	<input type="checkbox"/> High Blood Pressure	Allergies _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> History of Heat or Cold Injuries	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> History of Altitude Sickness	Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart Condition	<input type="checkbox"/> Seizures	_____

Describe any additional physical, medical, or mental health conditions.

Have you ever experienced chest pain, dizziness, or any other abnormal symptoms when participating in a physical activity? If yes, describe below.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever sustained any injury that affects your ability to participate in a physically demanding activity? If yes, describe below.

☐ Yes ☐ No

MEDICATIONS:

List any current medications you are taking or will be taking on the trip—prescription and non-prescription—and your reason for taking them.

ACTIVITY PREFERENCES

In what physically demanding activities do you enjoy participating?

CANOEING EXPERIENCE/PREFERENCES

Do you have previous experience canoeing or with other water/paddle sports?

☐ Yes ☐ No

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate the following questions.

1. How would you rate your experience level in canoeing?
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High
2. At what level of expertise do you rate yourself for this trip?
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High
3. What is your comfort level in anticipation of this trip?
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High
4. How much does slowing down to admire the scenery matter to you during this trip?
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High Importance
5. How far do you wish to be pushed out of your comfort zone on this trip?
Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Challenge Me
6. What activity level are you expecting and hoping for on this trip?
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

BACKPACKING EXPERIENCE/PREFERENCES

Do you have previous experience backpacking?

☐ Yes ☐ No

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate the following questions.

1. If you have backpacked before, how fast of a hiker do you consider yourself to be?
Slow 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Fast
2. When hiking in a group, how fast do you prefer the group to travel?
Slow 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Fast
3. How slow of a hiker do you prefer to hike with?
Slow 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Fast
4. How much does hiking fast matter to you during this trip?
Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High Importance
5. How much does slowing down to admire the scenery matter to you during this trip?
Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High Importance
6. How far do you wish to be pushed out of your comfort zone on this trip?
None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Challenge Me
7. What activity level are you expecting and hoping for on this trip?
None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

List any additional relevant information to enable trip leaders to ensure your safety and enjoyment on this trip.
